



*Congressman*

**BOB MENENDEZ**

*Legislative Update*



**Spring 2003**

Dear Friend:

As your representative in Washington, one of my responsibilities is to ensure that Jersey City receives its fair share of federal funding. As a member of the House Leadership, I have worked closely with local leaders, concerned citizens, and housing advocates to obtain funding for a number of worthwhile projects that will benefit your community.

Historically, the federal government plays an important role in ensuring that fair housing opportunities are available to all, and its focus has been to ensure housing for those of our neighbors with the lowest incomes. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 4.7 million American households today are paying more than half of their limited incomes on housing. For these families living paycheck to paycheck, one unforeseen circumstance, a sick child, a needed car repair, or a large utility bill can send them into homelessness. That is why housing and economic development issues have been especially important to me since I first came to Congress.

Over the past few years, I helped secure a \$34.1 million grant from HUD to revitalize the Lafayette Gardens public housing development. The grant is being used to replace 492 older public housing units with 300 new units developed on-site and 550 units developed off-site. More than 1,000 families are expected to benefit from the relocation and community and supportive services proposed in the revitalization plan. This \$34 million will leverage an additional \$130.5 million in public and private funds. I was especially pleased to work with HUD to secure this money, which will go a long way in addressing our immediate and long-term needs by improving the lives of the residents of Lafayette Gardens.

In addition, I announced that HUD had awarded Jersey City an \$8 million Loan Guarantee for the development of a 440,000 square foot industrial park located in the Morris Canal Industrial Redevelopment Area. Taken in conjunction with a Brownfields Economic Development Initiative grant in the amount of \$1.75 million that Jersey City also received, this money is being used for environmental cleanup, acquisition, and site remediation of the Morris Canal Industrial Park. While Jersey City is experiencing tremendous economic growth along its waterfront, other areas have been left behind. This loan guarantee will benefit low- to moderate-income persons through the creation of at least 255 jobs.

I was also able to help secure \$14 million in federal aid and loans from HUD that will provide relief and help revitalize our communities by providing loans for home ownership, funding for education and crime prevention programs, funding for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of properties, and assistance for persons living with AIDS. These funds will assist in improving the lives of our residents and invigorating our urban community and economy.

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Finally, I am supporting a number of important legislative initiatives to improve housing opportunities and promote economic development in our community. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 1102, the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act. This legislation would use the profits generated by the Federal Housing Administration to establish a trust fund so that states and non-profits could build affordable housing rental units in mixed-income locations, construct affordable homes for low to middle income citizens, and provide rental subsidies to low-income individuals. This bill would triple affordable housing construction in the United States by providing the necessary tools to produce, rehabilitate, and preserve at least 1.5 million affordable rental units over the next decade.

Unfortunately, the Bush Administration's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2004 proposes a 30 percent cut in public housing operating subsidies. Everyone in our society should have access to safe, quality, and affordable housing -- but when individuals or families are unable to attain such housing, public housing subsidies can make the difference between having a roof over your head and being homeless. Therefore, I joined with my Democratic colleagues in writing to HUD Secretary Martinez to express our deep dismay with the proposed cuts and asking that they be repealed. I also recently wrote to the House Appropriations Committee leaders in strong support of public housing programs and requested that the funding necessary to meet the housing needs of our residents be restored. As the Chairman of the Democratic Caucus, please be assured that I will continue my efforts to support all legislation which will provide and increase housing opportunities for our community.

I hope you find this update useful and informative. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of assistance to you on these or any other issues in the future.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
Member of Congress

*Congress of the United States*  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business

  
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This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense.

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